DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 397 477 EA 027 712

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | Employer Recruitment & Orientation Guide. |
| INSTITUTION | Jobs for the Future, Boston, MA.; Northwest Regional Educational Lab., Portland, Oreg. |
| SPONS AGENCY | Department of Education, Washington, DC. |
| PUB DATE | 96 |
| CONTRACT | VN93003001 |
| NOTE | 84p. |
| AVAILABLE FROM | NWREL Document Reproduction Service, (800)-547-6339, ext. 519. |
| PUB TYPE | Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) |
| EDRS PRICE | MF01/PC04 Plus Postage. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Cooperative Education; Cooperative Planning; *Cooperative Programs; *Corporate Support; Educational Cooperation; *Education Work Relationship; Elementary Secondary Education; Orientation; *Partnerships in Education; *School Business Relationship; Work Experience Programs |

ABSTRACT

Work-based learning is a competency-based experience that integrates classroom instruction with structured work site experiences. Its purpose is to allow students to gain occupational and employable skills while applying and advancing their academic abilities. This guide contains strategies and resources to help educators involve the business community in work-based learning. The guide is a tool for building the interest, understanding, and commitment of employers to form partnerships with schools and create work-based learning opportunities for young people. Section 1 describes strategies for approaching and interesting employers in work-based learning and for securing their commitment. The section also offers suggestions for preparing employers and their employees for working with and supervising students. Section 2 contains fact sheets that answer questions most commonly asked by employers about work-based learning. The fact sheets explain such logistical issues as liability, child labor, and union involvement, as well as five different program approaches. Highlights of case studies of work-based learning experiences are included. The third section summarizes the responsibilities and roles of each key person involved in work-based learning-- the employer, the employee, the student, and the teacher/program coordinator. A glossary is included. (LMI)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 397 477

# R

recruit

# Employer Recruitment & Orientation Guide

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

CONNECTIONS
LINKING WORK AND LEARNING

EA 027 712



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# Preface

This guide is a tool to build and strengthen the interest, understanding, and commitment of employers to form partnerships with schools and create work-based learning opportunities for young people. Partnership is both the goal and the foundation of this guide.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) and Jobs for the Future (JFF) chose to collaborate on this product because both institutions are committed to expanding opportunities for all youth to make informed and meaningful career decisions, preparing young people for the demands of a changing workforce, fostering productive partnerships between schools and business, and using the community as a learning resource.

The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory has a 30-year track record of providing research and development services addressing the needs of children, youth, and adults. While governed by a board of directors drawn from Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington, the Laboratory's leadership activities extend nationwide. The Education and Work Program serves local and state organizations committed to building systems that serve all persons on their life and career journeys.

Jobs for the Future (JFF) is a national, non-profit organization that conducts research, provides technical assistance, and proposes policy innovation on the interrelated issues of work and learning. Founded in 1983, JFF's goal is to encourage policies and practices that prepare all citizens for effective transitions between learning and work. JFF is one of the leading organizations in the country working to improve the school-to-career transition of all young people. For the past six years, JFF has worked at the local, state, and national levels to develop a new system for linking employers with schools and for placing all youth on career paths.

Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory

J • F • F JOBS FOR THE FUTURE



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# Table of Contents


**Preface** inside front cover

**Acknowledgments** ii

**Introduction**
- What is in this guide? 3
- How do you use this guide? 4
- What is not in this guide? 5

**Strategies**
- Building a network of employers 9
- Targeting employer recruitment efforts 10
- Preparing an effective approach 12
- Contacting employers 14
- Orienting employers and employees 17
- Providing ongoing support to employers and employees 18

**Fact Sheets**
- What is work-based learning? 24
- Why is work-based learning important? 26
- What are employer benefits of work-based learning? 27
- How can an employer recruit employees to work with students? 29
- What liability issues arise with work-based learning? 31
- When do child labor laws apply to work-based learning? 33
- How can an employer ensure confidentiality? 36
- How can an employer involve unions in work-based learning? 38
- What equity issues are relevant to work-based learning? 40
- What are youth like? 42
- What is a field trip? 44
- What is a job shadow? 47
- What is a career exploration? 50
- What is an internship? 54
- What is extensive work-based learning? 58

**Roles and Responsibilities of Partners**
- Field trip 63
- Job shadow 66
- Career exploration 69
- Internship 72
- Extensive work-based learning 75

**Glossary** 81



This publication is based on work sponsored wholly, or in part, by the U.S. Department of Education under contract # VN93003001, Community Education Employment Center (CEEC). The content does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department or any other agency in the U.S. government.



© Copyright Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1996. Permission is granted for school and business staff to reproduce this product for use in their own programs.

# Acknowledgments

The development of this guide was predicated on partnership. The Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) and Jobs for the Future (JFF) would like to thank the many people who committed their time and talents to help make this a useful resource for anyone interested in creating stronger connections between schools and employers.

**NWREL Staff:**

Dionisia Morales, Writer
Larry McClure, Education and Work Program Director
Andrea Baker, Senior Associate
Robin Harris, Replication Specialist
Barbara Warren-Sams, Information/Publication Specialist
Dennis Wakeland, Editor

**JFF Staff:**

Hilary Pennington, President
Marlene Seltzer, Executive Vice President
Richard Kazis, Vice President for Policy and Research
Mary Ellen Bavaro, Director of Communications
Mary Kathleen O'Flanagan, Senior Project Manager
Anthony Alongi, Project Manager
Christopher J. Hogan, Project Associate

**Designer:**

$R^2$Art—Reneé Renfrow

**Cover Photo:**

George B. Diebold/The Stock Market Photo Agency

**Design & Review Teams:**

- Fadhilika Atiba-Weza (Board of Cooperative Education Services, NY)
- Chuck Bailey (Washington State Labor Council)
- Mark Barrall (Oregon Department of Education)
- Louann Blankenship (Sharp Learning Center, GA)
- Bill Braly (Oregon Department of Education)
- David Brewer (Eugene School District, OR)
- Wallace Cole (Alpha High School, OR)
- Jill Carpenter (Vancouver School District, WA)
- Susan Cottle (Rogue Community College, OR)
- Pete Gilmour (Fred Meyer, Inc., OR)
- Dee Gray (North Clackamas School District, OR)
- Nancy Hargis (Oregon Department of Education)
- Mike Kaiel (North Clackamas School District, OR)
- Darletta Kilgore (State of Oregon Bureau of Labor and Industries)
- Meg Kilmer (Parkrose High School, OR)
- Joyce Lamberson (Good Samaritan Hospital, OR)

- René Léger (Roosevelt High School, OR)
- Richard Lengyel (The Boeing Company, WA)
- Anne LoPiccalo (Pocatello High School, ID)
- Pam McAdams (CE2 Alternative School, OR)
- Sandra Moody (Liberty Bell High School, WA)
- 'Nita Moore (Good Samaritan Hospital, OR)
- Mary Norquist (Business Youth Exchange, OR)
- Veronica Rivisto (Seattle-King County Private Industry Council, WA)
- Dan Ruddell (University High School, WA)
- Anthony Sarmiento (AFL-CIO, Washington, DC)
- Jim Schoelkopf (The School Company, WA)
- Louise Stevens (Edmonds School District, WA)
- Kathy Treves (Portland Area Career Training Center, OR)
- Jeff Triplett (Portland Community College, OR)
- Suellen White (Methow Valley School District, WA)
- Sara Wiley (North Clackamas School District, OR)
- Laura Wyckoff (Writer, OR)
- Jeanne Yerkovich (David Douglas High School, OR)

**U.S. Department of Education:**

Paul Geib, Program Officer

Kate Holmberg, Program Officer

**In addition** to the people who contributed to this guide, various written materials were used as resources, including:

- *Experienced-based Career Education*, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory
- *School-to-Work Toolkit: Building a Local Program*, Jobs for the Future
- *Learning Through Work*, Jobs for the Future and Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation
- *Connecting Activities in School-to-Career Programs: A User's Manual*, prepared by the Bay State Skills Corporation for the Massachusetts Office for School to Work Transition
- *School-to-Work Opportunities and the Fair Labor Standards Act*, Office of School-to-Work Opportunities of the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor
- *Risk Management Workbook*, Sedgwick James of Oregon, Inc.

employer
recruitment & orientation

# introduction

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**Welcome to the growing number of schools recruiting employers as partners in work-based learning.**

**Work-based learning is a competency-based experience that integrates classroom instruction with structured worksite experiences. Its purpose is to allow students to gain occupational and employability skills while applying and advancing their ability in academic areas. Through work-based learning, the school and the workplace become resources for students to learn about careers, reflect on their interests, set personal goals, and develop the skills and knowledge needed for a productive future.**

**This guide contains strategies and resources to help you involve employers in your community in work-based learning. It is designed to help you secure their commitment and provide them the information and support they need to work with youth.**

## What is in this guide?

This guide is in four sections:

- **Strategies** describes ways of approaching employers, piquing their interest in work-based learning, and securing their commitment. This section also offers suggestions on how to prepare employers and their employees for working with and supervising students. Throughout this section are **Action Steps** that provide concrete suggestions on how to carry out employer recruitment plans. You will find an Action Step wherever you see an arrow ( ——► ).
- **Fact Sheets** answer questions employers commonly ask about work-based learning. They cover logistical issues (explaining subjects such as liability, child labor, and union involvement) and program approaches (describing five different work-based learning strategies). Each ready-to-use Fact Sheet is

designed to be applied in a variety of ways as you recruit and orient employers in your community. **Case Highlights** bring to life the issues discussed on Fact Sheets by telling stories of employers, students, schools, and communities involved in work-based learning. You will find case highlights in the page margins. Black-line masters of the Fact Sheets are packaged separately with this guide so they can be easily photocopied.

- **Roles and Responsibilities of Partners** summarizes what each key person (employer, employee, student, and teacher/program coordinator) involved in work-based learning is responsible for doing.
- **Glossary** defines terms used in this guide as well as others relevant to work-based learning.

## How do you use this guide?

There is no one right way to use this guide because there is no one right way to recruit and orient employers to work-based learning. Instead, this guide provides a flexible framework you can tailor to meet your specific needs.

The first section, Strategies, includes suggestions on how to involve employers in work-based learning and provide them with the information they need to work with students. Because no two communities are alike, you need to consider each suggestion in light of what you know about the employers in your area. Consider this section as a set of recommendations, not commandments. Use it to design a recruitment and orientation strategy suited to the unique characteristics of your community.

Once you have crafted your recruitment and orientation strategies, the second section, Fact Sheets, includes resources to help you carry out your plans. This section answers questions employers commonly ask about work-based learning. The Fact Sheets have a variety of applications. Use them to prepare a presentation, produce marketing materials, structure an orientation session, or assemble an information packet. Use the last two sections, Roles and Responsibilities of Partners and Glossary, as supplementary resources for these and other purposes.

We encourage you to use the information in this guide in a way that best meets your program's needs. To make the guide practical for a wide variety of uses, it is printed and bound for easy duplication. The material may be reprinted without permission for use in your program; please give credit to the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and Jobs for the Future.

## What is not in this guide?

This guide is an introduction to work-based learning; it does not address every issue that arises when recruiting and orienting employers. The Fact Sheets help answer the questions most consistently raised by employers. However, a variety of important topics are not covered here—such as students with disabilities, conflict resolution, transportation, and recordkeeping. Unfortunately, we were unable to address all issues relevant to work-based learning within the limits of this guide.

The Fact Sheets and other resources in this guide are designed to help you recruit employers and inform them and their employees about work-based learning. This guide does not, however, provide suggestions on how to assess the learning potential of a worksite, develop an integrated curriculum, or implement a program. Other products in the *Connections* series are available to help you and your community structure and carry out these aspects of work-based learning. For a complete list of *Connections* products see the inside back cover of this guide.

employer
recruitment & orientation

# strategies

**To establish work-based learning experiences for students, you must build a network of employers, target those most likely to participate, approach them to secure their commitment, and inform them about how to work with students. These principles are at the heart of employer recruitment and orientation.**

**The following pages provide general strategies as well as specific Action Steps to help you get employers on board.**

## Building a network of employers

Building a network of employers involves creating a circle of relationships in your community. As you make more contacts with employers, the circle of potential work-based learning partners widens. Ways of initiating this networking process include the following:

- **Use current contacts**—When trying to recruit employers, the best place to start is with the people you already know. Begin with the contacts—formal or informal, professional or personal—you already have with local businesses.

Inventory the ways your school or district is connected to employers. For example, contact members of vocational education advisory committees or cooperative education partnerships; get in touch with liaisons between your school and organizations such as Junior Achievement and scouting groups.

- **Use the employers you know to expand your circle of contacts**—The employers you know, of course, know other employers. Ask employers for referrals to other businesses and potential contacts. Even the employers who do not choose to form a partnership with your school may be able to suggest others willing and able to provide worksite learning opportunities for students.

Make employer recruitment part of your daily routine—your physician, dentist, mechanic, tailor, travel agent, veterinarian, and grocer are all people you could involve in work-based learning.

- **Use business leaders to involve their peers**—One of the most effective recruiting strategies is to find "champions," employers who strongly support work-based learning and are willing to promote the concept to their peers. Employers like to hear from and are often more easily convinced by people who "speak their own language" and can relate directly to their questions about working with students.

**S**

strategies

- **Use the resources of organizations that have existing relationships with employers**—Seek out the organizations in your community that have connections to employers and can help you leverage support for work-based learning. Intermediary or brokering organizations such as chambers of commerce, small business development centers, and trade or industry associations can furnish membership lists. They can also provide a forum for your ideas by including you on the agenda of meetings or arranging special opportunities for you to meet with representatives of member organizations.

  Many labor organizations participate in councils and committees geared toward education reform and can point you in the direction of affiliated employers supportive of work-based learning. General business organizations like the local Rotary Club or Kiwanis are also good sources of employer contacts through membership lists and events. To reach employers who may be underrepresented elsewhere, be sure to include specialized groups—such as minority business councils and professional organizations for women—in your networking.

  Finally, state agencies such as economic development and employment departments are valuable resources given their experience in job placement.

Identify local unions by looking in the yellow pages under "L" for Labor Organizations. Contact your area's central labor council to help you target your efforts. Ask vocational teachers and counselors in your school or district for names of labor representatives who serve as members of program advisory committees.

Consult with local organizations (e.g., business-education compacts, parent-teacher associations) or local officials for anecdotal information on the business community's partnerships with schools or involvement in workforce development initiatives.

Research local media such as newspapers, journals, and video archives for information on business involvement in school or community activities.

Request copies of annual reports or mission statements; these often highlight a business's civic activities.

## Targeting employer recruitment efforts

As you create a network of employers you will be connecting with a broad cross-section of the community. As your circle of contacts expands, you will eventually want to focus your efforts. To make efficient use of time and resources, target employers most likely to be interested in getting involved with work-based learning. Characteristics of good employer candidates include the following:

- **Prior involvement in school-business partnerships**—The best place to start is with employers who already are or have been involved with schools and other youth-development programs. If their experience has been positive, they may be willing to form a partnership with you for work-based learning.

- **Commitment to leadership in community affairs**—Every community has employers who are active in civic affairs. Employers in nonprofit industries such as health care, social services, and government are active because they have an explicit mission to serve the community. For-profit employers often become involved in civic activities because they recognize it is good business sense to promote a positive public image by giving back to the community and the local consumers on whom they depend.

  Regional and national companies (e.g., banks, manufacturers, utilities) often encourage their branch offices to get involved with local community issues. If there is a local branch of a regional or national company in your community, inquire whether its commitment to civic affairs includes school-business partnerships and which, if any, branches are involved in work-based learning. Businesses in your area may be more willing to participate in work-based learning if they know the head office has endorsed it and if they have information on what other branches are doing.

  → Contact the community relations specialist at the business's regional or national headquarters to obtain information on its policies for working with schools and a list of branches that are active in this way.

- **Familiarity with international work-based learning models** — Knowledge of youth-training systems in other countries can increase employer receptivity to work-based learning. For example, European systems integrate school and workplace learning and depend on the collaborative commitment of schools and businesses to invest in the lives of young people. Employers who have European customers or subsidiaries, who are themselves the product of a European training system, or who have participated in study tours to Europe are often more likely to understand the benefits of work-based learning.

  → Use library resources or annual reports to research whether a company has ties to or does business with corporations in nations that have strong youth training systems such as Germany, Denmark, and Sweden. Use local media to research employers' backgrounds to find out if they have first-hand experience with European educational systems.

- **Demand for better skilled workers**—Employers in many industries are concerned that they will not be able to find capable new employees for entry-level or skilled technical jobs. A variety of factors contribute to employers' concerns about the quality and supply of their workers, including an aging workforce, rapid technological changes, demand for new and different skills, and the decline of traditional training pipelines for employees. Any of these trends can boost employer interest in work-based learning because it is an investment in the skills of potential future workers.

  → Consult state economic development or employment departments for information on industry skill demands. Local resources such as the chamber of commerce or city/county government can help you determine whether these demands are affecting the training and hiring practices of businesses in your community.

Contact the chamber of commerce; it is an excellent source of information on local companies.

- **Commitment to training and upgrading workers' skills**—Employers who have invested in workers' skills and continuous improvement are likely to understand the value of work-based learning. Employers who provide benefits such as basic skills training, quality management programs, and tuition reimbursement to employees are likely to support your vision of work-based learning for young people.

## Preparing an effective approach

When you approach employers, it is important to have an understanding of their perspective, interests, and motivation. The better you frame your ideas to reflect their ways of doing and thinking about things, the more your recruitment efforts are likely to succeed.

As you prepare your approach, keep in mind some of the following issues:

- **Understand employer motivation**—When asked why they participate in partnerships with schools, employers generally point to labor market needs and civic responsibility. Efforts to recruit employers should address both of these issues and be framed in terms of the benefits to them.

Take advantage of the resources available at local public, college, or university libraries. Librarians can help you find information about employer interests and industry trends.

- **Recognize that all employers are not alike**—Employers are not a homogenous group; a variety of factors affect their decisions, including the size of the business, its management structure, work environment, and mission. Do your homework before contacting employers; learn as much as you can about their company and industry. Create an employer profile so you can suggest a partnership that meets both your program goals and the employer's needs and interests.

- **Expect and be prepared to answer hard questions**—Employers want clear, concise explanations. They respect those who respect their time and experience. Employers will want to know about program administration, design, purpose, costs and benefits, and the roles and responsibilities of partners. The more you anticipate questions on these issues, the more likely your recruitment efforts are to succeed. Typical questions raised by employers include the following:

- What roles and responsibilities are being asked of me and my employees?
- What will work-based learning cost in wages, time, and training?
- Who is responsible for program administration and governance?
- What kind of support will my staff and I receive from the school?
- What legal issues do I have to consider?
- How will students be selected?
- What kind of preparation do students receive before coming to the workplace?
- If students have behavior or attitude problems at the worksite, who is responsible for handling these situations?
- Has this kind of program been successful with other employers in this or other communities?
- How will my company and employees benefit?

- **Understand why some employers resist getting involved with work-based learning**—Knowing in advance the most common reasons employers give for ***not*** participating in work-based learning can help you anticipate their concerns and thereby make a stronger appeal. The most common explanations employers give for their resistance to form partnerships with schools include the following:
  - Anxiety about liability or child labor issues
  - Limited experience working with or supervising young people
  - Limited time to devote to training young people
  - Discomfort with bringing youth into the workplace
  - Concern about lack of program structure and support
  - Anticipated resistance from employees or union officials
  - Additional costs in staff time, wages, and insurance

Deepen the partnership with employers by increasing their involvement in school activities. For example, invite employers to serve on program steering committees, provide input on curriculum development, comment on the skill demands of their industry, volunteer in the classroom, or offer summer internships for teachers.

- **Define what you mean by partnership**—Keep in mind that you are asking employers not only to provide a service to the school, but also to become partners in shaping how young people learn and prepare for their futures. Think about what that partnership means to you; innovative ways of involving employers will foster shared program ownership and a mutual connection to broader education goals. Whereas some employers will not have the time or interest to do more than work directly with students, others will want to make a stronger link with the school.

## Contacting employers

Once you have finished researching and targeting employers and you have the necessary information to address their questions and concerns, the next step is to contact them. Bringing employers on board is a process; do not expect to seal the deal as the result of a single phone conversation or meeting. Unless they are already familiar with work-based learning, most employers will need time to warm up to the idea before they are able to make a commitment. Keep the following suggestions in mind:

Send letters out in small batches so you can follow up with each employer in a timely fashion. If, for example, you send out hundreds of letters at once you will not be able to contact all the employers shortly after they receive them. This increases the chance that employers will have forgotten about the letter by the time you call.

- **Send a letter of introduction**—Before calling an employer consider sending a letter to introduce yourself and briefly describe your work-based learning program. The letter should be no more than a page. In the closing, mention that in a week you will follow up with a phone call to discuss the program in greater detail. If you do not have a specific contact at the business, address the letter to the head of human resources or personnel. In small businesses that do not have these distinct departments, send it to the president, executive director, or general office manager.

  Sending a letter of introduction is often better than cold calling (calling employers with no advance notice), because it gives employers basic background information before a first conversation. In small communities, this formal step may not be necessary.

- **Make phone contact**—If you call an employer as a follow-up to a letter of introduction, use the conversation as an opportunity to begin discussing the details of work-based learning and to gauge the employer's interest in forming a partnership with your school. If, however, you are cold calling, this is your first chance to introduce yourself and describe your program. Whether you are calling to follow up or make an initial contact, schedule an in-person meeting if the employer is interested in learning more about the program you are proposing. Follow up your phone conversation with a letter confirming the meeting and include a fact sheet on work-based learning for their reference. (You could, for example, include one of the Fact Sheets from the next section of this guide).

  If you are cold calling and you do not have a specific contact at the business, ask to speak with the head of human resources, personnel, or hiring. If this person is not responsible for making a decision about work-based learning, it is likely that he or she will be able to direct you to the person who is.

**Prepare notes of what you want to say before calling; having notes in front of you can help you stay on track during the conversation. Use what you know or have learned about both the company and industry to anticipate questions and present ideas that will get the employer's attention.**

- **Meet with the employer in person**—Regardless of how initial contact is made, it is important to schedule an in-person meeting. Set the meeting at a quiet location that is convenient for the employer. This is your chance to give a full presentation on your program, spelling out program logistics and the roles and responsibilities of partners. Ask the employer to give an overview of his or her business, describing features such as its services or products, the number of people employed, and the work environment. Encourage the employer to discuss candidly any concerns or reservations about work-based learning and to ask questions about your school, program, or students.

**Leave the employer an information packet with items such as a school brochure, fact sheets on work-based learning, a summary of benefits to the employer, letters of endorsement from other participating businesses, a statement of roles and responsibilities of partners, and a sample student learning agreement. Select items carefully; the fewer you include, the more likely they are to be read.**

- **Outline the next steps**—At the close of your meeting, outline the next steps. If the employer is interested in forming a partnership with your school, arrange a time to sign written agreements and decide on when students can begin learning activities at the worksite. If the employer needs more time to think about getting involved, arrange a time to follow up with additional information and to answer other questions. Finally, if the employer is not interested in work-based learning, clarify why he or she does not want to participate. This will help you better understand his or her motivations and decide if you should approach the employer again at a later date.

Whether or not an employer agrees to form a partnership with your school, always leave on good terms.

- **Be professional**—Whether communicating in person or on the phone, adhere to the norms of the business community. Remember that many businesses have stricter dress requirements than schools. Respect the employer's time—know your material and present it concisely. Be a good listener and respond frankly to questions the employer raises.

Contact other schools to see if they have—or are interested in—work-based learning for their students. Also contact local community or four-year colleges, apprenticeship programs, and trade schools, all of which usually have connections with employers. If there is or will be competition for employer partners, convene a group of interested parties to discuss the best way to provide opportunities for all young people without overtaxing the business community.

- **Coordinate your recruitment efforts with those of other schools and learning institutions**—It is likely that other programs in your community are trying to develop partnerships with employers. In the long-run, you are better off coordinating your efforts with other schools and learning institutions rather than competing with them. An organized approach to recruitment, taking into account the needs of the entire community, will prevent local employers from being overwhelmed with requests for work-based learning opportunities for students. In small communities, coordinating recruitment efforts can be as simple as sharing records on employer contacts and partnership agreements. However, in larger communities it may be necessary to establish more formal systems, such as coordinating committees and electronic databases, to ensure that all schools and learning institutions make the most efficient use of the local employer base.

- **Create a record-keeping system**—As you recruit employers, keep careful records of whom you have contacted, the information you have shared, their level of interest in providing work-based learning experiences, and any follow-up activities. Careful record keeping will help you organize your current efforts as well as build a database for recruiting employers in the future. Include as part of your records the reasons reluctant employers give for not forming a partnership with your school.

## Orienting employers and employees

Employers and the employees who will be working with students need to be familiar with the objectives of your specific work-based learning program and understand their roles and responsibilities. Essential elements of effective employer and employee orientation include the following:

- **Get acquainted with your worksite contact person**—To coordinate your orientation activities, not to mention the work-based learning program as a whole, you need to work collaboratively with a worksite contact person. The contact person, who is chosen by the employer, acts as a liaison between the workplace and the school and serves as a resource for participating employees who have questions about working with students. Find out who this person is, introduce yourself, explain the program, and plan activities such as the orientation session.

- **Conduct a formal orientation**—The information you provided to the employer during the recruitment process may have been shared with his or her employees; however, it is important to formally present the program mission, goals, and expectations to those who will be working with students.

  Orientation discussions should cover roles and responsibilities of partners, program structure and objectives, adolescent behavior, mentoring skills, different cultures represented at the school, and support services for employees working with students. Depending on the type of work-based learning, it may be appropriate to include additional topics such as insurance and liability, child labor laws, and confidentiality.

  When conducting an orientation session, allow time for employers and employees to raise questions and discuss issues. If possible, circulate a copy of your agenda before the session, and let them add to and comment on items. The orientation is your chance to share information essential to the success of the work-based learning experience; therefore, you want to be sure you are not overlooking issues central to employer and employee interests and concerns.

- **Prepare an information packet**—No matter how well you present information the first time, it is always helpful to leave behind written materials to which employers and employees can refer. The information packet should include items such as an overview of program goals and policies, a description of the roles and responsibilities of all partners, relevant sample forms, the names and phone numbers of school and worksite contacts, and a list of support resources.

## Providing ongoing support to employers and employees

Orientation activities and materials will help employers and employees understand work-based learning, but they will likely need additional support once students arrive at the worksite. Usually the less intensive experiences (such as field trips and job shadows) require less employer and employee support. As students spend more time at the worksite involved in activities that require greater responsibilities (such as career explorations, internships, and extensive work-based learning), employers and employees will need more ongoing assistance to sustain a successful worksite experience.

You cannot anticipate all the support needs that will arise once employers and employees begin working with students. However, some suggestions for providing support include the following:

- **Identify the points of contact**—Make sure employers and employees know who to contact at the school or the workplace if they have a question, comment, or conflict.
- **Provide supplemental information**—Employers and employees will likely raise questions throughout the course of working with your students. It is natural for issues (such as confidentiality, conflict resolution, and nontraditional occupations) to arise as students get involved with the people and the work of the company. Provide relevant information on an as-needed basis using the resources at your school and in your community to help you respond to questions.
- **Organize workshops or seminars on how to instruct and evaluate students**—Although they may have experience teaching and supervising adult workers, employers and

employees may need help guiding young people at the workplace. A workshop or seminar might focus on understanding adolescents, teamwork, cultural diversity, and mutual respect of opinions.

- **Stay in regular communication with employers and employees**—Whether in person, by phone, or through meetings or electronic correspondence, staying in regular contact with employers and employees can help you identify and resolve problems early. Checking in on a casual basis is generally sufficient, although sometimes more formal methods—meetings, interviews, surveys—are useful.

- **Coordinate experiences at the school**—Arrange opportunities for interested employers and employees to teach a class, help lead a seminar, or simply observe students in class to understand better the school component of the work-based learning.

- **Use a newsletter to highlight work-based learning activities**—Start your own or contribute articles to an existing school or company newsletter. Publishing articles about your program is an opportunity to reinforce information provided during orientation and keep partners informed of progress. Encourage employers and employees to contribute articles as a way of sharing their experiences and exchanging ideas.

- **Organize employer and employee recognition activities**—Send the message to the employers and employees working with your school that their participation is highly valued. In addition to sending thank you letters, plan activities such as recognition breakfasts or program picnics to give the school and the community a chance to celebrate employer and employee participation and to support their involvement in the future.

employer
recruitment & orientation

# fact sheets

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**The previous section helps you plan how to recruit and orient employers. This section provides the tools you need to carry out those plans.**

On the following pages, 15 Fact Sheets answer some of the questions employers most commonly ask when considering work-based learning. The Fact Sheets are ready-to-use resources you can apply to activities such as the following:

- Preparing for a presentation with a prospective employer partner
- Organizing an orientation session
- Assembling an employer information packet
- Helping employers recruit their employees and peers

The Fact Sheets cover an assortment of topics, which fall into two main categories:

- **The first 10 Fact Sheets** cover logistical issues related to work-based learning such as insurance and liability, child labor, and union involvement.
- **The last five Fact Sheets** describe different work-based learning strategies. These Fact Sheets are written to address the person(s) working directly with students. They include specific suggestions on what to do and a checklist that summarizes key action steps.

Black-line masters of the Fact Sheets are packaged separately with this guide so they can be easily photocopied.

**F**

fact sheet

A small real estate agency was solicited by the chamber of commerce to provide work-based learning opportunities for local high school students. The owner of the agency was interested, but wary of committing too much of the company's time. After hearing that there was a wide variety of possible activities, the agency owner agreed to host job shadows, which require minimal time. After several job shadow experiences, the owner agreed to host students for both career explorations and internships. "We all got a lot out of those job shadows. The kids got a taste of what it's like to work in a real estate agency and we realized how helpful we could be without interfering with business. Now we want to have them for longer periods of time and really teach them about the business."

# What is work-based learning?

Work-based learning is a competency-based experience that integrates classroom instruction with structured worksite experiences. Through work-based learning students gain occupational and employability skills while applying and advancing their knowledge in academic areas.

Work-based learning uses the school and the workplace as resources for students to learn about careers, reflect on their interests, set career goals, and develop the skills and knowledge needed for a productive future. It provides students an opportunity to interact with adult workers, observe and ask questions about careers, do hands-on activities, and reflect on the skills and knowledge needed to lead fulfilling lives.

Each of the many types of work-based learning experiences requires different degrees of time, planning, and commitment. The further one moves along a continuum of work-based learning (such as the one pictured on the following page), the more intense the experience, the longer students spend at the worksite, the greater the involvement of employers and teachers, the more opportunity there is to connect what happens at work with what happens at school, the more time employers and employees invest in mentoring and supervising students, and the greater the opportunity for students to assume responsibility for their own learning.

Employers can get involved in work-based learning in many ways. Some employers begin with an experience that requires a minimum of time and effort, while others prefer to begin by working closely with teachers and students in designing a long-term, fully integrated program. Interestingly, the employers who start with a moderate level of activity often expand their commitment as they recognize the benefits of work-based learning to young people as well as to their own workplace.

There is no one right way to become involved with work-based learning. What is appropriate depends entirely on the employer's interests and how those interests change or stay the same over time.

## What is work-based learning? cont.

### Work-based Learning Continuum

| Field Trip | Job Shadow | Career Exploration | Internship | Extensive Work-based Learning |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1-3 hour tour of a workplace | 3-6 hour experience during which students observe employees | 10-30 hour experience during which students spend time one-on-one with workers and do hands-on activities | 3-18 week experience during which students develop broad skills through hands-on learning and instruction, culminating in a product or presentation | 3-12 month experience during which students gain specific technical skills, college credits, and/or certification through hands-on learning closely integrated with school-based activities |

**F**

fact sheet

A pest control company ran a classified ad for controllers and received 50 applications. After two rounds of interviews no qualified candidates emerged. "The problem," the owner/manager explained, "is people think all this job involves is spraying basements for bugs. Sure, it's an entry level position, but it's not that simple. We train on the job, but there are some skills you just expect—like knowing how to deal with customers in a courteous manner, or understanding the importance of getting to an appointment on time. Math and science skills are important, too. I need people who can do estimates and eventually pass the licensing test. I turn down a lot of applications because there are so many mistakes in them. I need people who can show that they do careful work; otherwise, I'm out of business."

# Why is work-based learning important?

To stay competitive, today's employers—large and small—need highly skilled people who can think critically, solve problems, make independent decisions, and be effective team members. There is growing concern, however, that employers will be unable to find entry-level workers with these qualifications.

Research underscores that the nation is not adequately preparing young people to be productive workers. Part of the problem is that most young people do not see a connection between what they learn in school and their future careers. Students are not unfamiliar with the world of work. The 1990 U.S. Census estimated that more than 50 percent of 16- and 17-year-olds and more than 25 percent of 15-year-olds are part of the nation's workforce. A more recent study revealed that close to 70 percent of 12th graders are employed part-time.* But few of these experiences lead students to connect what they do in school with what they do on the job, leaving them in the dark about the range of skills and knowledge required to succeed in today's job market.

Schools alone cannot provide students with the necessary combination of academic, technical, and social skills; they need the support and cooperation of the business community. In forming a partnership, teachers and employers can create learning opportunities that expose young people to the skills, experiences, and attitudes essential to succeed in today's economy.

From the school's perspective, the value of work-based learning is that it provides a real-world context for academic subjects. When given the opportunity, students are eager to connect what they do in school to the adult world. They generally demonstrate greater enthusiasm for classroom learning when they can see how it relates to their future.

When thoughtfully planned and carefully structured, work-based learning is an effective way for students to assess their interests and set personal and career goals as they build academic and technical skills that prepare them for the challenges of a rapidly changing world.

* source: *Digest of Education Statistics, 1995*. Washington, D.C.: National Center for Education Statistics

F

fact sheet

# What are employer benefits of work-based learning?

Work-based learning not only benefits the student, but also has significant rewards for the employer. Consider the following:

- **Qualified entry-level workers**—Many industries have a scarcity of capable new employees for entry-level and skilled positions. Working with students can help expand the pool of job applicants and reduce training costs. For example, students who complete internships as part of work-based learning experiences during the school year often acquire sufficient skills to qualify for paid entry-level positions after they graduate or during the summer.

- **Productive work**—While some work-based learning activities center primarily on observation, others provide opportunities for students to do hands-on learning. Students who take on real responsibilities often do productive work. A contribution of productive work does not violate child labor laws if (1) the work-based learning is a planned program of sequenced activities that promote the mastery of basic and employment skills, (2) the benefits to the workplace are offset by the burden of instruction and supervision, (3) it does not displace any regular employee, (4) no wage is paid, and (5) there is no promise of employment upon completion of the work-based learning activity. ***(Seek legal advice or consult federal and state wage and hour offices regarding all child labor issues.)***

- **Positive public image**—If a business depends on the loyalty of customers in the community, playing a visible role in a partnership with schools and students helps create a positive public image. Good community relations make smart business sense.

- **Fulfillment of civic responsibility**—Employers in the nonprofit sector often have as part of their charter an obligation to serve the community. Forming a partnership with schools can help meet this civic responsibility.

A teaching hospital sponsored several internships for students. A technician in the phlebotomy lab was impressed with the students' enthusiasm, but was embarrassed that she often could not answer their questions. Worried that she might misinform them, she began studying in the evenings. After several months she decided to take the certification exam. Although her supervisor had suggested several times that she do this, she had always lacked the self-confidence. Working with the students motivated her. When she passed the exam her supervisor gave her more responsibility in the lab and with the students, which helped her enjoy her job more and do it better.

## What are employer benefits of work-based learning? cont.

- **Increased company morale**—The enthusiasm of young people can be contagious and frequently has a positive impact on employees. Adults often feel pride in sharing their expertise with students and find new excitement for their jobs when they are around young people who are interested in what they do and who want to learn from them.
- **Tax credits**—In some states employers receive tax credits for providing workplace learning opportunities for students. State employment and education agencies have information about the circumstances under which this applies to work-based learning.
- **Investment in the future**—Connecting students with the workplace gives them a clearer sense of the demands, opportunities, and responsibilities associated with being productive citizens. The time and attention given to young people today will ultimately affect not only their future, but everyone's future. The students of today are the workers, consumers, policy makers, educators, and parents of tomorrow. The stronger foundation they have, the better off everyone will be in the long-run.
- **Personal satisfaction**—Becoming involved with students is rewarding; it is exciting to help a young person discover and learn about the world. Through work-based learning students often take greater interest in school, increase their sense of connection to the community, and behave more responsibly. It is satisfying to be a part of this process of learning and personal growth.

# How can an employer recruit employees to work with students?

When recruiting employers to participate in work-based learning, the school contact will usually meet with the owner, senior manager, personnel director, or whoever is responsible for hiring. The person who makes the decision to form a partnership with the school will not necessarily work with students; however, he or she will take on or delegate the responsibility for recruiting employees to participate. To build interest among employees, the employer should keep the following suggestions in mind:

- **Use the school contact and the local union as resources**—It is likely that the school contact, with his or her experience working with a variety of employers, will be able to help design a strategy for recruiting employees. The local union is another potential resource. With adult programs offered through local affiliates, union representatives may be able to offer insight on what is (and is not) effective in getting employees involved in different kinds of initiatives at the workplace.

- **Designate a lead contact person**—The employer should identify an employee willing to coordinate the work-based learning experience at the worksite. Employees may be more willing to participate if they know there is someone who will be on call to help if problems or questions arise. Depending on the size and intensity of the program, it may be important to divide the responsibilities of the contact person among a team of employees so that one person does not feel overburdened. Although this requires more coordination at the worksite, it relieves anxiety about workload and extends the sense of ownership for the program.

- **Build interest throughout the company**—Sell the idea of work-based learning to people at different levels of the company—from the chief executive officer (CEO) to front-line workers, from board members to union representatives. In smaller companies, orient the senior staff members and encourage them to support employees interested in working with students. Once employees recognize that the program is valued throughout the organization, they will more likely want to participate.

F

fact sheet

The manager of a food distribution center in a small suburban community could not get any employees to volunteer to be job shadow hosts. The school contact suggested building some grass-roots support by finding a small group of employees with children at the school and have their own children do a job shadow with them. The parents were pleased with how the experience went—especially how prepared their children were to ask questions, introduce themselves to other workers, and observe the worksite. This made the parent-employees advocates of work-based learning, who then volunteered to recruit co-workers.

## How can an employer recruit employees to work with students? cont.

- **Approach employees in ways they trust**—Building interest in work-based learning requires a personal appeal from the people employees trust most: other employees. Employers should seek out volunteers willing to recruit their peers. An information session is a good opportunity to give employees a chance to hear from co-workers who either already have had positive experiences working with students or who already believe in work-based learning.

- **Anticipate key questions and concerns**—Employers should not be surprised if some employees are reluctant to volunteer to work with students. Employees generally give several reasons for not wanting to get involved: apprehension about demands on their time, the threat of students displacing workers, and the possibility of being held liable for accidents. They may also express anxiety about their ability to "teach" or deal with adolescents. The worksite and school contacts should work together to find the best way to provide employees with the information and support they need. Employees will be more willing to participate in work-based learning if they are confident that resources are available to answer their questions and address their concerns.

- **Create a system of support and reward**—Employees need to know that they will receive the necessary support to work with students. Employers, working with school contacts, need to provide employees with orientation sessions and materials and training about special issues such as conflict resolution, motivating students, and handling emergencies. Employees need assurance that they will not be penalized in any way (e.g., pay docked, benefits lost) for working or not working with students. Because participation will require employees to develop new skills and change their routines, employers should consider providing incentives such as tuition reimbursement or special company recognition. Generally, the school contact will take responsibility for activities such as thank-you letters and newsletters that show appreciation and community support for employee and employer participation in work-based learning.

# What liability issues arise with work-based learning?

Because students must be insured at school and work, insurance and liability issues arise any time students leave school premises to continue learning at the workplace. If students are participating in paid work-based learning experiences, they should be covered by the employer's workers' compensation insurance and liability policy. If, however, students are in unpaid work-based learning placements, insurance coverage and liability can rest with either the school or the employer, depending on the circumstances.

Liability issues generally fall into four categories: (1) injury occurring to the student while at the workplace, (2) injury occurring to the student while in transit to or from the workplace, (3) injury to patrons or employees of the workplace, and (4) damage to the employer's property.

For employers to protect themselves from risks and liabilities, they must seek legal advice on this matter. This Fact Sheet provides some general guidelines for understanding relevant insurance and liability issues; however, ***it does not substitute for legal advice or local policy.***

- **Injury to the student at the workplace**—Students involved in paid work-based learning experiences should be covered under the employer's workers' compensation insurance. This coverage affords the employer the same protection for students in paid positions as it does for full-time, regular employees.

  Students in unpaid experiences cannot be covered by the employer's workers' compensation plan; however, because students' learning activities off school premises generally are considered to be an extension of the school, they are usually protected by the school district's liability policies. However, as more and more students take advantage of unpaid learning opportunities in the community, many employers and school administrators now want students covered by special insurance policies and riders. To provide this coverage a school district can amend its workers' compensation insurance or purchase separate medical coverage; an employer can acquire a general liability policy.

**F**

fact sheet

The project manager of a hydroelectric dam wanted to have students do unpaid internships, but was concerned about the risks of having young people work around potentially dangerous equipment. The school contact assured the project manager that insurance and liability for students would be covered through an extension of the district's workers' compensation policy, which was part of a pre-existing cooperative education program. The project manager created eight internships, but then an unexpected problem arose—no public transportation went to the dam and none of the students had their own cars. The project manager arranged to transport students in the dam's passenger van, but first checked with the company's insurance carrier to make sure the students would be covered in the event of an accident.

## What liability issues arise with work-based learning? cont.

To avoid misunderstanding in the event of accident or injury, the employer and school contact should discuss all relevant insurance and liability issues before students enter the workplace. The school contact should get in touch with the district insurance agent to determine specific provisions and call state and federal departments of labor to determine whether students are considered under the law to be in an employment relationship. The employer should also be prepared to discuss liability issues with a representative of his or her insurance carrier to make sure all necessary coverage is in place. The school district and employer should sign a written agreement specifying the terms—such as insurance requirements, hold harmless statements, responsibility for supervision, and subrogation rights—of the liability and coverage for students.

- **Transportation**—In general, liability for injuries or accidents during transit rests with the party responsible for transportation. For example, a student is responsible if he or she drives a personally owned car; the district is responsible if students travel by public transportation; and the employer is responsible if students are transported in a company-owned vehicle. There are, however, variations in different districts and states, making it necessary for the school contact, working with the employer, to determine the standards that apply locally.

- **Injury to patrons or employees of a business**—The employer and the school district are exposed to the possibility that students may cause injury to patrons or employees of the business. By extending its liability policy, a school district can usually provide coverage in the event a student injures someone at the workplace. Exposure to the employer can also occur, particularly if the employer has sole responsibility for training and/or supervising students.

- **Damage to the employer's property**—It is possible that either through accidental or intentional acts students will damage the employer's property. The employer's property insurance may provide coverage in such cases, but there will likely be deductibles, payment of which will need to be negotiated between the employer and the school district. Possible solutions are to have the students named on the school district's policy if it provides property damage coverage or to have the employer waive subrogation rights against the district, school, and students.

F

fact sheet

# When do child labor laws apply to work-based learning?

The federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) protects the rights, safety, and well-being of young workers. The FLSA applies to students involved in work-based learning experiences if, under the law, they are considered to be in an employment relationship.

Child labor laws may differ at state and federal levels. When there is a discrepancy between federal and state regulations, the more stringent regulations applies. Employers should seek legal advice or consult federal and state wage and hour offices if there is a possibility students will be considered "employed" under the law. This fact sheet provides some general guidelines regarding when a learning experience is and is not considered employment; ***however, it does not substitute for legal advice or local policy.***

**Students are *exempt* from the federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)** when all of the following five criteria are met:

1) The work-based learning experience has the following elements:

   - Includes planned job training or work experience appropriate to the student's ability, is coordinated with school-based learning, and leads to the award of a skill certificate
   - Encompasses a series of activities that build on one another, increasing in complexity and promoting the mastery of basic skills
   - Exposes students to "all aspects of the industry" and promotes the development of broad, transferable skills
   - Provides for real or simulated tasks or assignments that encourage students to develop higher-order critical thinking and problem-solving skills

   If some of these elements are not present, it is possible that a student might be considered in an employment relationship and subject to FLSA.

**F**

fact sheet

An internship program at a county hospital had to have projects that would not violate child labor restrictions regarding the health and safety of minors. Because many of the placements were in the radiology department it was necessary to clearly define the difference between what a 16-year-old and an 18-year-old could do in a regulated area. Without violating legal restrictions, worksite supervisors found challenging learning opportunities for all of the students. Those under the age of 18, who were prohibited to be around radiographic machines, worked in the office interacting with patients, doctors, and nurses to become familiar with the operation of the department. Once these students turned 18, they were permitted to work in the exam room, assisting technologists and developing x-ray film.

## When do child labor laws apply to work-based learning? cont.

2) The student receives ongoing instruction and supervision at the worksite, so that any productive work the student performs is offset by the burden of the training and supervision the employer provides.

3) The placement of the student at the worksite for work-based learning does not result in the displacement of any regular employee.

4) The student is not entitled to a job at the completion of the work-based learning experience, although employers can offer employment if they so choose.

5) The student is not entitled to wages or other compensation for time spent during the work-based learning experience, although the student may receive a stipend for expenses such as books or tools.

Child labor laws do not apply if there is not an employment relationship; however, employers are encouraged to adhere to child labor laws with regard to hazardous conditions.

- **Students are *subject* to the FLSA** when all of the above listed criteria are not continuously met during a work-based learning experience. Students are then considered to be in an employment relationship. Students in an employment relationship are subject to standards and limitations according to their age. The following are guidelines for relevant FLSA issues:

  1) *Minimum age standards*—In general, students must be at least 14 years of age to be employed in nonfarm jobs. Fourteen- and 15-year-olds can work in nonfarm jobs, except in the 17 occupations considered by the U.S. Secretary of Labor as too hazardous for youth under the age of 18 and in selected other areas (e.g., cooking, construction, warehousing). Sixteen- and 17-year-olds may perform all nonfarm jobs except those included in the 17 hazardous occupations orders. For farm jobs, once teenagers reach age 14 they may perform the same agricultural work as an adult except in occupations that involve the agricultural hazardous orders. Students 16

years of age and older can be employed in any farm job. Federal law defines persons who are at least 18 years old as adult workers.

2) *Time and hour restrictions*—FLSA limits the number of hours and the times of day a student 14 to 15 years of age can work in nonfarm jobs. Work must occur within the following limitations: outside school hours, no more than three hours on a school day, no more than 18 hours in a school week, no more than eight hours on a non-school day, no more than 40 hours in non-school weeks, and between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. (or as late as 9 p.m. between June 1 and Labor Day). The only time-of-day and hour limits on 14- and 15-year-olds doing farm work is that employment be outside of school hours. Federal law does not limit the number of hours or time of day young people 16 years of age and older can work.

3) *Proof of age*—The FLSA requires employers to keep on file the date of birth of all employees under the age of 19. Employers are encouraged to obtain an official age certificate, such as a federal certificate of age or one issued by the state (often referred to as a work permit).

4) *Wages and stipends*—If a student is in an employment relationship and covered by FLSA, he or she must be paid no less than the federal minimum wage. If the student is also covered by state wage and hour statutes and there is a difference between state and federal regulations, the student must receive the higher of the two wages. Students are exempt from federal and state wage regulations if the school or business holds a subminimum wage certificate.

- **Health and safety**—Whether or not a student in a work-based learning experience is considered in an employment relationship, the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) regulations that apply to the workplace also apply to the student. The school contact and employer have to define the health and safety issues at the worksite and coordinate how the necessary safety instruction will be delivered to students.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES:

For specific questions about child labor laws and for the phone numbers of regional wage and hour offices contact the Wage and Hour Division of the U.S. Department of Labor.

For a summary of federal law on employment of minors related to work-based learning see "School-to-Work Opportunities and the Fair Labor Standards Act," published jointly by the U.S. Departments of Education and Labor.

For an overview of federal and state child labor laws, see "Minor Laws of Major Importance," prepared for the U.S. Department of Education by the Academy for Educational Development's National Institute for Work and Learning.

F

fact sheet

# How can an employer ensure confidentiality?

Although it is not to be minimized, confidentiality should not be a barrier to work-based learning. Across the country, agencies and individuals dealing with confidential or client-privileged information—physicians, lawyers, psychiatrists, counselors, ministers, banks, credit unions—have identified meaningful learning activities for students while at the same time protecting client confidentiality.

Employers interested in working with students, but concerned about protecting confidentiality, should consider the following:

- **Train to build awareness**—If students are going to be exposed to confidential information, employers should provide them the same confidentiality training that regular employees receive. Because confidentiality can be a complicated matter, it may be necessary to spend more time with students than with adult workers to review training tapes, presentations, or written material on the subject. To ensure that students have a true grasp of the issues related to confidentiality, employers can design tasks in which the student, under close supervision, is required to demonstrate an understanding of how to handle confidential matters.

- **Gauge maturity level**—No matter how clearly confidentiality is explained, not all students will have the maturity to grasp it. After observing and talking to the student, employers should use their best judgment to gauge if he or she is mature enough to understand and apply appropriate behavior regarding confidential information and procedures.

- **Educate customers**—Customers may not be comfortable with the idea that a student is exposed to confidential information unless they understand that the student has received the necessary training. Employers should explain to customers that the student is in a learning situation and has been properly trained to handle confidential matters.

## How can an employer ensure confidentiality? cont.

- **Respect the student's confidentiality**—Just as the student has a responsibility to the employer, the employer has a responsibility to the student. Through conversations with school staff or the student, an employer may learn personal information about the student. It is important that this information be kept in confidence and not shared with others at the school or the workplace.

The trainer at an interstate bank has found that students take confidentiality as seriously as the full-time adult employees. Interns from three schools receive the same training as new hires, including information on industry standards and company policy, before being assigned to branch banks near their schools. "I sometimes ask," said the trainer, "if they had considered confidentiality as an issue in banking and most admit they had not. It's something we can teach them, a professional attitude, really, that they can use at any level in any financial institution."

F

fact sheet

# How can an employer involve unions in work-based learning?

Local unions are a valuable resource for making work-based learning experiences successful for both students and employees. With their expertise in apprenticeship training and employee relations, union representatives can help create effective learning opportunities for young people. In addition, involving local labor representatives can help build a stronger sense of interest and ownership in work-based learning among employees, many of whom look to the union for leadership regarding on-the-job issues.

Ways to involve local unions in work-based learning include the following:

- **Solicit the participation of the steward**—As a worksite liaison between employees and the union, the steward can be very helpful in implementing and overseeing work-based learning activities. Employers should ask the steward if he or she is interested in acting as a contact person to answer questions for employees as they work with students. In addition, stewards, because they are in regular contact with frontline workers, can suggest ways to recruit participants based on their knowledge of employees' interests and concerns regarding working with young people.

- **Seek lessons learned from local union representatives**—Many labor organizations have adopted resolutions on work-based learning and participate in councils geared toward education reform. Their experience in these areas can provide employers with helpful information on how to work effectively with schools and provide students with valuable learning and experience at the worksite. In addition, unions operate their own adult programs through local affiliates and have insight on what is (and is not) effective in getting employees involved in different kinds of initiatives. They may have useful advice on the best ways to launch work-based learning activities, based on lessons learned from their own programs.

## How can an employer involve unions in work-based learning? cont.

- **Include union representatives in planning activities with the school**—Employers can include union representatives in conversations with the school regarding the type and scope of the work-based experience. Labor representatives should be included as joint partners with employers interested in playing an active role with the school in building or expanding work-based learning within their company or among others. Union representatives can, for example, be important contributors on curriculum advisory groups or program oversight boards. Involving unions in this way helps develop a sense of ownership for work-based learning and facilitates a strong partnership. Asking the union to sign off after the deal is done is asking for trouble.

- **Invite union representatives to help coordinate and participate in work-based learning orientation sessions**—The orientation session is an opportunity for school contacts to present the goals and expectations of work-based learning to employers and employees in an effort to prepare them for working with students. The orientation covers such topics as roles and responsibilities of partners, adolescent behavior, mentoring skills, and support services for employees. Other topics can include insurance and liability, child labor laws, and confidentiality.

  Ideally, a copy of the agenda will be circulated before the session to let employers and employees add to and comment on items. This entire process should also include union representatives, who bring a unique perspective to work-based learning. Including them helps ensure that everyone has the same information; it also ensures an equal opportunity for all opinions to be voiced and heard.

**F**

fact sheet

A print shop was eager to form a partnership with two high schools in the district to provide extensive work-based learning placements. A group of seniors had completed several career explorations and internships in different industries and were now seriously considering careers in printing. The school wanted to create a program in which students were paid and received academic credits for their activities at the worksite. The owner of the print shop insisted that union representatives were at the table from the first day of discussion because he thought creating paid positions might be a conflict of interest. The union representatives played a key role in deciding the wage scheme for the program. They supported the concept of a stipend for students since non-hourly workers would not influence lay-off decisions or other labor issues.

F

fact sheet

# What equity issues are relevant to work-based learning?

Students with diverse backgrounds—young men and women of different race, culture, ethnicity, and learning style—participate in work-based learning. The following are some suggestions for employers to ensure equity for the students who are learning at their workplace:

- **Recognize cultural differences**—It is important to be aware of and knowledgeable about cultural differences of the students who participate in work-based learning. School staff—program coordinators, teachers, counselors—can help employers understand and constructively address the differences in students' cultural backgrounds.

- **Consider the individual needs of students**—Employers should be sensitive to the individual needs of particular groups of students who have historically received differential treatment. These groups include female students, students of color, those with disabilities, those who speak English as a second language, and teen parents.

- **Provide opportunities for students to explore nontraditional occupations**—There are a variety of sources of biases—television, peers, relatives, popular opinion—that influence students' self-perceptions. Part of the point of work-based learning is for students to test how they see themselves and challenge their assumptions about what they think they would enjoy doing as a career. Employers, whenever possible, should make students aware of nontraditional occupations for their gender and provide students with mentors, supervisors, or hosts who represent adults working in nontraditional roles. In order to give students a comprehensive understanding of different careers, when appropriate, employers should discuss issues of occupational segregation and the wage gap for women and people of color at all educational levels.

- **Support opportunities for *all* students**—Employers should make it clear to school staff that they support work-based learning opportunities that encourage all students—regardless of their race, ethnicity, disabilities, or educational goals—to participate in work-based learning.

## What equity issues are relevant to work-based learning? cont.

- **Encourage training for the employees who will be working with students**—Employees may need training to recognize and eliminate any biases or stereotypes they may hold about careers or specific groups of students. Employers can provide such training or work with school staff to include such training as part of orientation sessions and ongoing support. Stereotypes held by students, teachers, counselors, and parents/guardians often influence whether female students and students of color feel a particular occupation is appropriate for them. Employees need to be aware of such issues in order to help create an equitable learning experience at the workplace. Training may also be necessary to help employees work effectively with students who have disabilities. Employees working with students with disabilities need to be vigilant in ensuring that students are exposed to a wide range of occupational choices.

- **Uphold policies and procedures for addressing sexual and racial harassment**—All policies and procedures regarding sexual and racial harassment that apply to regular employees should also apply to students at the workplace. Employers must make clear that harassment is a serious matter that will not be tolerated. It is important to protect the rights of students at the workplace and create a safe and supportive environment for learning.

At first, no special effort was made to recruit job shadow hosts from the Latino-owned businesses in the community. Then, the program coordinator decided to translate recruitment materials into Spanish and enlist the help of several Spanish-language graduate students from the community college to make personal contacts with employers. "The first year it worked out that three Latino employers were involved, but by targeting our efforts we now have 10—and growing interest. What made the difference was to approach the employers in a way that was more familiar to them and to emphasize the opportunity to act as role models for some of our Latino students who don't think it's possible to do something like own their own business. But that's because it's not what they are used to seeing. Now they have that chance."

F

fact sheet

# What are youth like?

Adolescence can be a turbulent time during which young people struggle to define their personalities and find their places in the world. While it is sometimes a challenge to work with adolescents, it is also very exciting and rewarding to be part of this period of rapid learning and personal growth. Adolescents involved in work-based learning demonstrate their ability to take on adult responsibilities successfully and meet real-world challenges.

While this Fact Sheet is not intended to be a primer on adolescent psychology, it does summarize some of the general characteristics that define adolescence.

- **Early adolescence (ages 12 to 15; grades seven to nine)**—As their minds and bodies go through rapid changes, young adolescents look for ways to understand the people they are becoming. In this time of emerging self-image, young adolescents can be characterized by the following traits:
  - Frequently uneasy about trying new experiences
  - Anxious for peer group approval
  - Eager for adult status and privileges but not adult responsibilities
  - Primarily focused on the present, rather than the future
  - Sometimes unable to concentrate for long periods of time
  - Prone to generalizing and making strong value judgments
  - Learning to socialize with adults; especially interested in displaying these traits to adults other than parents
- **Late adolescence (ages 16 to 18; grades 10 to 12)**—Late adolescence is a time when young people begin to define more clearly a sense of self and test their ideas and interests in the context of the adult world. For most it is a period of burgeoning independence. The following traits are characteristic of late adolescents:
  - Eager for opportunities to make decisions
  - Sometimes apt to challenge authority
  - Very interested in physical appearance (their standard, not necessarily an adult's)
  - Wanting independence and privileges but possibly having

trouble with responsibility and personal discipline

- Feeling uneasy about their preparation for the future
- Trying out different values; beginning to build personal philosophies
- Highly sensitive to the reactions of adults and wanting respect, although they may feign indifference
- Likely to feel insecure in new settings with adults, though they may put on an air of confidence

Whether dealing with students in early or late adolescence, remember that work-based learning takes students out of the comfort zone of school. As a result, students may be shy or quiet until they become accustomed to being in the work environment, doing hands-on activities, and meeting and interacting with adults. Do not mistake reticence for lack of interest. Even if students stay in their shell for the duration of the work-based learning experience, they still gain a great deal just by having spent time at the workplace.

**F**

fact sheet

A junior in an arts and communication career cluster who was interested in photography got an internship in a photography studio. Most activity involved interacting with clients and the photographer. Marie was painfully shy, and would speak only when spoken to. Her mentor was concerned that she had lost interest in photography, but Marie insisted that she was enjoying the experience because she was learning a lot. In a second internship at a film processing lab, Marie worked closely with her supervisor, learning how to operate the printing machines. As she gained more technical skills, she gained more confidence and slowly began to interact more with other employees. She even helped train a new worker to process and print film.

F

fact sheet

# What is a field trip?

A field trip is a worksite experience (typically one to three hours) during which a group of students, escorted by school staff, tours a business and speaks with workers. A field trip is appropriate for any grade level; however, its format and the information presented should be tailored to the age of the students.

## What is the purpose?

A field trip helps students accomplish the following:

- Gain broader exposure to the world of work by visiting workplaces in the community
- Get an overview of how a business operates by touring the different departments and areas of a workplace
- Expand their understanding of the variety of jobs in a career area and industry
- Talk to different adults about the academic and technical skills required to do different jobs
- Increase their vision of career opportunities
- Understand the connection between school, work, and achieving their goals

## What is my role?

Your role is to give students a picture of careers, technologies, organizational structures, departments, skill demands, and working environments while touring your workplace. You should answer students' questions as well as engage them in conversation by asking them questions about the things they see and the people they meet during the field trip.

## What do I do?

Careful planning before students arrive at the workplace is the key to an effective field trip that does not disrupt the normal flow of work. Suggestions to keep in mind as you plan include the following:

- **Determine how the field trip will be organized.** A field trip can be organized in a number of ways. You might follow the development of a product from conception to completion, moving from one work area to the next. You might pose a hypothetical problem and walk through who has to do what to solve it. Or organize the trip around a theme—"health and safety on the job," "computers help us be more productive," or "how we work as a team."

- **Organize the field trip for age-appropriateness.** How you organize the field trip has a lot to do with the interests and maturity level of the students. For a group of 12-year-olds it might be best to explore a variety of things for short periods of time. With older students you might go into greater detail about careers in different departments, skill requirements for different jobs, and the connection between what is learned in school and what happens at work. Consult with the teacher or school program coordinator to help you determine the most appropriate approach.

- **Time the tour and schedule specific activities.** Schedule specific activities for specific times so employees along the tour route can plan their work accordingly. Allow time for students to ask questions.

- **Mix talking with showing.** Demonstrate what you are talking about so students can see what you mean. If appropriate, and if time permits, involve students in hands-on activities.

- **Ask probing questions.** Encourage students to ask questions, but also prompt their participation by asking them questions: What do you suppose is happening in this area? Where do you think the product goes from here? What math skills do you think a worker must know to do this job? How is teamwork here different from (or the same as) teamwork in sports? How is our work here affected by computers?

**An employee at a computer supply company organized a field trip like a treasure hunt. As she moved the students from one department to another she had the students find something in each. In the parts department, after learning about the system of categorizing inventory, students had to figure out where the replacement drives were kept. In the shipping department students had to locate the heavy-package floor scale and figure out how much it would cost to mail themselves, via air mail, to Barbados. In the human resources department, after hearing how people were hired, the students had to look at three resumes and decide which person they thought would be best qualified to work in the parts department.**

## What is a field trip? cont.

- **Encourage other employees to talk about their work.** Enlist the help of other employees. Ask them to speak to students along the tour, lead a discussion, or demonstrate their work. Students should hear from a variety of people doing a variety of jobs. In particular, encourage employees in nontraditional roles (for example, men or women breaking occupational stereotypes) to talk about their jobs and how they decided on their careers.
- **Have fun!** Above all, enjoy yourself. You are on home turf, sharing information about what you know and do best.

### Checklist

- ❑ Confirm the date and time of the field trip with the teacher/program coordinator
- ❑ Discuss the focus or theme of the tour with the teacher/program coordinator in advance; if possible, coordinate it with class studies
- ❑ Identify the number of students; 10 is a reasonable size. If the group is larger, you may consider splitting the group and recruiting another employee to help lead the tour
- ❑ Notify the teacher/program coordinator if there are special clothing requirements for the worksite
- ❑ Review all relevant health and safety issues, and provide all necessary safety gear; review all rules, regulations, and policies
- ❑ Make sure everyone along the tour route knows (1) students will be in the area, (2) where they are from, and (3) why they are there
- ❑ If available, give students "take aways," such as souvenir pens, samples, or brochures

F

fact sheet

# What is a job shadow?

A job shadow is a worksite experience (typically three to six hours) during which a student spends time one-on-one with an employee observing daily activities and asking questions about the job and workplace. Some students do only one job shadow in a year, but many programs are realizing the benefit of multiple job shadows to help students better assess areas of career interest. Most schools use job shadows for students in the seventh through 12th grades.

## What is the purpose?

A job shadow helps a student accomplish the following:

- Begin to identify possible career interests
- Observe the daily routine of adult workers
- Gain an awareness of the academic, technical, and personal skills required by particular jobs
- Develop and apply communication skills by interacting with and interviewing workers
- Realize that different jobs are characterized by different work cultures and working environments
- Navigate the community by traveling to and from the job shadow worksite
- Understand the connection between school, work, and achieving goals

## What is my role?

As a job shadow host, do your regular daily work while talking about it with the student. Help the student understand how your job fits into the company by visiting other departments and describing how you work with other employees. If the student has job shadow assignments, allow him or her time to complete them.

**F**

fact sheet

The receptionist of a busy social services agency was not sure what the eighth-grade boy could learn by doing a job shadow with him—particularly since he spent most of his time at the front desk answering phones, filing, and directing clients to case workers. The student had lots of questions—he wanted to know how he had decided on his career, what kind of training he had, and what he liked most about his job. When the student asked if he would like to change jobs, the receptionist explained that one of the good things about the work was that it was easy for him to do from his wheelchair. This led to a conversation about the laws that protect the rights of people with disabilities. On the job shadow evaluation form, the receptionist wrote, "At first I wasn't sure what I had to teach, but in the end I think the student learned some important things."

## What is a job shadow? cont.

### What do I do?

For many students a job shadow is a first entry into the real world of work. Following are some suggestions to consider when you act as a job shadow host:

- **Be yourself.** This is essential. The student needs to see what the world of work is really like. Take him or her on a brief tour of your business, then just do what you would do on an average day. Throughout the job shadow, explain the skills, responsibilities, education, and training required by your job.
- **Engage the student in active learning.** If possible, let the student do some hands-on tasks related to your work, such as attending and taking minutes at a meeting, helping with a mailing or doing a discrete task on the computer. The purpose is not to train the student, but to give him or her a feeling for some of the activities in your day. There are also non-work activities that can give the student a sense of the work environment, such as eating lunch in the cafeteria or accompanying workers on a break.
- **Explain the important aspects of your work and how they relate to other jobs in the company.** Share insights about your work and how it fits in with the company as a whole. Why is your work important? How do other people influence your ability to do your job? Bring up these subjects as you walk through different departments, take phone calls, or attend meetings. As you introduce the student to co-workers, explain how your work relates to theirs.
- **Explain how the work of your company affects the local community.** Put the work of your business in the larger perspective of the community. What products or services does it provide local customers? What environmental concerns does the company have to be aware of? Does the workforce of the company reflect the demographics of the local community?
- **Answer the student's questions as best you can.** While at school, the student will prepare questions for the job shadow: "What kind of training would I need to do your job?" "What do you like most about your job?" "What kinds of equipment do you use?" Be frank when answering the student's

## What is a job shadow? cont.

questions. If a question makes you uncomfortable or is inappropriate explain that you prefer not to answer. If it regards confidential matters, explain your company's policy on proprietary information. If you do not know the answer to something, suggest ways the student might research the answer.

- **Be patient.** For many students, going to a job shadow is the first time they independently leave the comfort zone of school. Being in a new setting around unfamiliar adults may make them more shy or nervous than they would ordinarily be. Be patient and supportive during the job shadow; listen carefully to what the student has to say and encourage him or her to ask questions.

- **Provide information requested by the school.** Generally, the school will want background information about you and your workplace before the job shadow and will ask you to evaluate the experience when it is over. Supplying this information is essential to maintaining and improving job shadow experiences for students, you, and other employers in the future.

### Checklist

- ❑ Attend a job shadow orientation and/or review materials provided by the school
- ❑ Confirm the date and time of the job shadow
- ❑ Schedule the job shadow on a day when you are involved in a variety of activities
- ❑ Review all relevant health and safety issues, and provide all necessary safety gear; review all rules, regulations, and policies
- ❑ Arrange for a back-up job shadow host in the event an emergency takes you away from the student
- ❑ Allow student time to complete required written assignments
- ❑ Complete any necessary forms, such as a job shadow profile and evaluation

F

fact sheet

# What is a career exploration?

Career exploration is a worksite experience (typically 10 to 30 hours over the course of several days or weeks) during which the student observes and interacts with workers, does hands-on activities, and completes written assignments to learn about the skills and knowledge required at the workplace. To get the greatest benefit, a student should complete several explorations across a variety of industries or within one specific industry. Through multiple explorations the student increases awareness of a variety of work settings and career areas. Most schools use career exploration for students in the ninth through 12th grades.

## What is the purpose?

Career exploration helps a student accomplish the following:

- Broaden awareness of different jobs and careers across industries
- Identify personal interests and abilities
- Begin to decide which careers to investigate further
- Increase self-esteem by engaging in hands-on tasks and interacting with adult workers
- Understand the interrelationship of "all aspects of the industry"
- Develop and apply decision-making and information-processing skills
- Develop and practice a variety of basic and employability skills
- Challenge assumptions and stereotypes about different jobs and careers
- Understand the connection between school, work, and achieving goals

## What is my role?

Your role is to help the student understand whether or not this is a career area of interest to him or her by providing opportunities to observe, do hands-on tasks, and ask questions. If the student has a career exploration guide, help the student do or see the things at the worksite that are needed to complete the assignments.

## What do I do?

The majority of a student's time should be spent doing hands-on activities and interacting with employees. To help structure an effective career exploration, consider the following suggestions:

- **Define the methods for exploring the site.** The essential elements of career exploration are hands-on learning and interactions with adult workers. Appropriate activities for a student could include touring all the departments of the company, following a product or process through its different stages of development, taking minutes at a staff meeting, greeting customers, taking and delivering phone messages, using a computer to write a memo to the staff explaining the purpose of career exploration, doing data entry, or estimating costs of ordering supplies. Each student should have an exploration guide provided by the school that includes assignments to complete both in the classroom and at the workplace.

  Either you can decide alone what the student does at the workplace, or you can include the student in the decision. Keep in mind that different students have different reasons for doing a career exploration with you. One student might choose your site because it represents an area of career interest; however, others might select it because it is close to their home, fits their class schedule, or does not have a strict dress code. It is also possible that a student does not choose the site, but is assigned by the school program coordinator. Given the wide variety of reasons a student might be with you

**The ranger at a forestry research station asked the student what, if anything, interested her about the environment. She said she was worried about the quality of the stream by her house. Based on her answer, the ranger suggested activities during which she could meet and work with some of the people involved with the station's water clean-up program. The student helped collect samples, observed the computer lab analysis process, and helped file topographical charts of stream beds. Even though it wasn't an area of real interest, the ranger insisted the student also spend some time with the people working on forest conservation. The ranger did this so she would see another side of the work at the station and begin to understand that the health of streams and trees are interdependent.**

## What is a career exploration? cont.

for career exploration, it is a good idea to include him or her in planning how to explore the worksite. Talk to the student; find out his or her motivations and interests.

- **Outline policies, rules, and regulations.** Make it clear that the student is expected to conform to company rules, regulations, and policies regarding behavior. Discuss subjects such as dress codes, smoking rules, confidentiality, and health and safety regulations. Allow the student to participate in new-worker orientation sessions if they are offered at the time of the exploration.

- **Encourage conversation and respond to questions.** It is likely that one of the student's career exploration assignments will be to interview you. Answer questions frankly; students want to know what you honestly think about your job. Remember, the purpose of the career exploration is to help students understand all aspects of your career so they can use this information to make informed decisions about their future.

- **Provide relevant literature.** Give the student materials related to the worksite such as catalogs, brochures, training manuals, reports, and union information. If possible, provide sample job descriptions and information on hiring practices.

- **Evaluate the exploration.** After completing the exploration, the student will likely ask you to complete an evaluation form to assess the exploration and his or her performance. Be honest and specific, providing examples of what the student did well and what he or she needs to improve.

### Checklist

- ❑ Attend an orientation session and/or review materials provided by the school
- ❑ Schedule and confirm the dates and times of the exploration with the teacher/program coordinator

## What is a career exploration? cont.

- ❑ Identify appropriate hands-on tasks
- ❑ Inform co-workers that a student will be doing a career exploration
- ❑ Enlist the help of co-workers willing to let the student observe their work and ask questions as part of the career exploration
- ❑ Review all relevant health and safety issues and provide all necessary safety gear; review all rules, regulations, and policies
- ❑ Confirm a back-up employee to supervise the student in the event an emergency takes you away
- ❑ Evaluate the experience

F

fact sheet

# What is an internship?

An internship is a worksite experience (typically three to 18 weeks) during which a student—with guidance and supervision at the workplace—completes a planned series of activities, set of learning objectives, or project(s) designed to give a broad understanding of a business or occupational area. By integrating the internship activities or project(s) at the workplace with school-based learning, the student develops both job and academic skills. An internship culminates in a demonstration (product or presentation) of learning jointly evaluated by school and work-site staff. Most schools use internships for students in the 11th and 12th grades.

## What is the purpose?

An internship helps a student accomplish the following:

- Develop transferable academic, technical, and employability skills
- Apply basic skills and knowledge to real-world settings
- Learn new skills relevant to the business hosting the internship
- Increase self-esteem by assuming real responsibilities in adult work settings
- Focus career interests by experiencing a job and career area in depth
- Understand the culture of the workplace and the finer points of interacting with co-workers and supervisors
- Understand the connection between school, work, and achieving goals

## What is my role?

Your role is to collaborate with the student and his or her teacher to structure the internship by setting outcomes and identifying activities to achieve them. Once the internship begins, you instruct, supervise, and support the student. When it is complete, you evaluate his or her performance.

## What do I do?

Internships require substantial planning, time, and commitment. As you get involved, some suggestions to keep in mind include the following:

- **Help design a student project or planned set of activities.** The first step is to work with the student and teacher to identify the outcomes for the experience and how to achieve them. The three of you should agree on goals, activities, and ways the student can demonstrate learning when the internship is completed.
- **Help write a learning agreement.** Once it has been decided what the student will be doing for the internship, the information should be captured in a learning agreement, signed by you, the student, and the teacher. In addition to a statement of outcomes and activities, the agreement should include the roles and responsibilities of partners so that participants have a common understanding of what is expected of them and others.
- **Instruct and supervise the student.** Part of the purpose of an internship is for the student to assume real responsibilities in the adult world of work. In the beginning of the internship it is important to explain explicitly what activities the student should do; initially, you will need to teach and carefully supervise the student. Over time, as the student becomes increasingly familiar with the business and confident with the work, you can give the student greater independence, encouraging him or her to suggest activities that will

**F**

fact sheet

A student interested in industrial design did an internship in a custom cabinet shop. She was struck by the amount of wood left over and thrown away when dimensional lumber was cut to size for cabinetry. Although the pieces were too small to use commercially, most were sanded, clear-grain wood. Encouraged by her supervisor, the student researched ways the waste wood could be used profitably. Her final project was a written report outlining the most viable option—donating the scrap lumber to a non-profit senior center whose clients use a woodshop to make holiday ornaments. The report included projections of the shop's waste wood supply based on its annual production schedule, an estimation of tax deductions, a narrative on the payoffs of recycling, and a sketch of a mobile bin that would allow volunteers to transport the material easily.

## What is an internship? cont.

help accomplish the goals of the learning agreement. Allowing the student to take greater responsibility for his or her learning does not mean that you no longer teach or supervise. On the contrary, as the student spends more time at the worksite, the activities of the internship should become progressively more challenging. As the student becomes comfortable working independently on one set of tasks, you should provide instruction in new skills and tasks that build on what has already been learned.

- **Provide feedback.** When you are pleased with the work a student has done, say so. It is important to provide positive feedback to the student when a task or situation is handled well. On occasion you may not be happy with the student's behavior or work. If, for example, the student breaks a rule, performs a task poorly, or uses bad judgment, say so immediately; you are doing a disservice by withholding an honest judgment. Be careful, however, not to embarrass the student in front of other workers or interns; pull the student aside to discuss problems. When you speak with the student, express your opinion without being judgmental and give the student a chance to express his or her thoughts on the issue.

- **Make the intern feel a part of the workplace.** Help your intern feel like a part of the workplace instead of a visitor. This can be achieved in a variety of ways—provide a work space (a spare office, cubicle, desk, or table), give the student an e-mail address to keep up on company news, or set up an in-box to receive messages or materials. Another way to help the student feel like a member of your team is to provide an identification badge, desk nameplate, or door name-tag so others in the company know who the student is. Make sure the student knows such important details as the company's policy on smoking, how much time is allowed for lunch, and where break rooms are.

- **Listen between the lines.** Throughout the internship, you will be teaching, explaining, and demonstrating new processes and procedures to the student. Do not interpret a lack of questions as a sign that the student necessarily understands everything that is going on. The student may be too shy to

## What is an internship? cont.

speak up at a particular moment or may not know what questions to ask. If it seems the student is not following something, ask if you should go over it again. Emphasize that there is no such thing as a stupid question because it is important to understand how and why something is done. When teaching or demonstrating a new task or skill, do not assume something is too obvious; the simple things you take for granted may be completely unfamiliar to the student.

- **Evaluate student performance.** The method of evaluating the student's performance will depend in part on the project or objectives used to define the internship. In general, your evaluation will be based on how well the student is able to demonstrate the skills articulated in the internship learning agreement.

### Checklist

- ❑ Participate in an orientation session and/or review orientation materials provided by the school
- ❑ Confirm the daily and weekly schedule for the internship
- ❑ Help student and teacher determine objectives and activities for the internship
- ❑ Sign an internship agreement
- ❑ Provide ongoing instruction and supervision to the student
- ❑ Work with the teacher to integrate the student's internship with learning at school
- ❑ Review all relevant health and safety issues, and provide all necessary safety gear; review all rules, regulations, and policies
- ❑ Evaluate the internship and the student's performance

F

fact sheet

# What is extensive work-based learning?

Extensive work-based learning is a worksite experience (typically three to 12 months) during which a student progresses through a planned sequence of increasingly demanding activities integrated with academic learning to (1) learn entry-level job skills and (2) get skill certification and/or postsecondary school credits. Most schools use extensive work-based learning for students in the 12th through 14th grades who, as the result of careful investigation, have identified a career area to pursue.

## What is the purpose?

Extensive work-based learning helps a student accomplish the following:

- Develop entry-level job skills
- Receive recognized credentials for both academic and occupational skills
- Prepare for postsecondary education as well as for a variety of jobs within an occupational cluster
- Understand the connection between school, work, and achieving goals

## What is my role?

Your role is to train and supervise the student to develop industry-recognized skills and to evaluate his or her work. You meet and consult regularly with school staff to coordinate school- and work-based learning so that they are mutually reinforcing.

## What do I do?

Extensive work-based learning is in many ways like on-the-job training, except that it is also integrated with school-based learning. While it puts demands on your time, it offers significant rewards as the student becomes an integral part of the company and takes on increasing levels of responsibility. To help establish and

## What is extensive work-based learning? cont.

maintain a successful placement keep in mind the following advice:

- **Help design a learning plan based on industry standards.** Working with the student and his or her teacher, create a learning plan that identifies both the general and technical skills the student is expected to achieve. Articulate the process of evaluating and certifying student performance and skills acquisition. The learning plan should reflect industry skill standards for entry-level employment. It should also articulate tasks that are increasingly challenging over time so that the student assumes greater responsibility and independence.

- **Provide opportunities for the student to do real work.** The only way for the student to learn the skills a job requires is to practice them. Assign complex tasks that involve the student in the real work of the company; however, it is essential that the student's work does not displace regular employees. It is important that you discuss child labor and union issues with the teacher/program coordinator and/or worksite contact to ensure the student's activities do not place the company at legal risk or violate collective bargaining agreements.

- **Train the student.** In training a student you should convey not only how something is done, but why it is done in a certain way and the consequences an activity has on the work of others. Understanding both the specific technical and underlying principles of what he or she is doing will prepare the student for a variety of jobs within your industry.

- **Hold the student to high expectations.** Set the same expectations for the student as you would for any entry-level worker. Hold him or her accountable to the same rules that apply to regular employees and subject to the same disciplinary procedures.

- **Identify a mentor for the student.** Being a good worker involves more than just doing your job—for instance, you have to know how to handle difficult situations, understand the expectations and unwritten rules of the workplace, and be a team player. These are skills the student can learn about through a mentoring relationship with an adult worker. If

State extension agents look forward to the spring when interns come from the local high school. All the students are in an agricultural career cluster connected with the community college's agricultural technology center. When the wheat samples start rolling in, everyone—students included—is pressed into service in the lab, grading and counting kernels per head and running moisture contents. The students, according to their mentors, begin relating the charts and tables they've studied in class to what's actually spread out on the tables in front of them. "It's not like they haven't seen wheat and barley before," one of the agents said. "Most of them are farm kids anyway. It's just that this process closes the gap between what's in the field and what's in the books."

## What is extensive work-based learning? cont.

possible, it is best to identify someone other than yourself for this role; there can be tension between the role of trainer/supervisor and that of mentor.

- **Evaluate student work.** You can use a variety of methods to assess and record student progress, ranging from a simple checklist to a comprehensive portfolio. Collaborate with the teacher/program coordinator to identify the most appropriate means of evaluating the student's work based on credit requirements for postsecondary schools and standards for industry skill certification.

### Checklist

- ❑ Attend orientation session and/or review materials provided by the school
- ❑ Work with the teacher and student to develop a learning plan that reflects industry standards
- ❑ Establish the student's work schedule
- ❑ Review all relevant health and safety issues, and provide all necessary safety gear; review all rules, regulations, and policies
- ❑ Provide ongoing instruction and supervision in job- and industry-related competencies
- ❑ Provide consistent support and guidance to the student
- ❑ Work closely with the teacher/program coordinator to integrate worksite learning with academic and vocational courses at school
- ❑ Establish a schedule to communicate regularly with the teacher/program coordinator
- ❑ Evaluate the experience

employer
recruitment & orientation

# roles and responsibilities of partners

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# Field trip:
## roles and responsibilities of partners

A field trip is a worksite experience (typically one to three hours) during which a group of students, escorted by school staff, tours a business and speaks with workers. A field trip is appropriate for any grade level; however, its format and the information presented should be tailored to the age and interests of the students.

- **Employer (owner, president, personnel manager, or designate)**
  - Identify a worksite contact person to coordinate the field trip(s)
  - Inform employees about field trips, and recruit them for participation as field trip hosts
  - Provide release time for employees to prepare and conduct the field trip
  - Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the school
  - Make accommodations for students with special needs
- **Field trip host**
  - Set a schedule for the field trip
  - Confirm the details of the field trip—such as date, time, number of students, length of field trip, safety gear, and special dress code—with the teacher/program coordinator
  - Discuss the focus or theme of the trip in advance with the teacher/school coordinator
  - Review with students all relevant health and safety issues, and provide necessary safety gear
  - Conduct a tour of the workplace showing students the different departments of the company, pointing out the different jobs people do and the skills they require, and describing the norms and expectations of the workplace
  - Alert everyone along the tour route that students will be in the area
  - Recruit other employees to participate

## Field trip:
### roles and responsibilities of partners cont.

- **Student**
  - Listen and observe carefully during the field trip
  - Ask questions about the skills required to do different jobs, the expectations of workers, and the workplace atmosphere
  - Observe all safety rules
  - Adhere to all guidelines for behavior established by the teacher/program coordinator and field trip host
  - Dress appropriately
  - Have a parent or guardian sign a consent form
  - Keep up with the group, being careful not to lag behind or get separated from the tour
  - Complete an evaluation to give your feedback on the field trip
  - Participate in reflection exercises to think and talk about the field trip
  - Write a letter thanking the field trip host
- **Teacher/program coordinator**
  - Provide students with background information on the host company and its industry, or assign students to research it
  - Coordinate details of the field trip—such as date, time, number of students, length of field trip, safety gear, and special dress code—with field trip host
  - Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the employer
  - Ensure that all students have signed parent/guardian consent forms

**Field trip:**
**roles and responsibilities of partners** cont.

- Arrange for transportation to and from the worksite
- Accompany students on the field trip
- Hold reflection sessions to allow students a chance to talk about what they saw and learned during the field trip
- Assign students to write a thank-you letter to the field trip host

# Job shadow:

## roles and responsibilities of partners

A job shadow is a worksite experience (typically three to six hours) during which a student spends time one-on-one with an employee observing daily activities and asking questions about the job and workplace. Some students do only one job shadow in a year, but many programs are realizing the benefits of multiple job shadows to help students better assess areas of career interests. Most schools use job shadows for students in the seventh through 12th grades.

- **Employer (owner, president, personnel manager, or designate)**
  - Identify a lead person to coordinate the job shadow(s)
  - Inform employees about job shadows and recruit job-shadow hosts
  - Provide release time for employees to prepare to host students
  - Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the school
  - Make accommodations for students with special needs
- **Job shadow host**
  - Attend a job shadow orientation session and/or review materials provided by the school
  - Discuss details of the job shadow—such as date, time, safety gear, and special dress code—with the teacher/program coordinator
  - Review with the student all relevant health and safety issues, and provide necessary safety gear
  - Help the student understand all aspects of your job by going through your daily routine and answering questions
  - Give the student a brief tour of the workplace and introduce him or her to other employees
  - Engage the student in some hands-on activities related to your daily work when appropriate
  - Be available to the student at all times

**Job shadow:**
**roles and responsibilities of partners** cont.

- Confirm a back-up person in the event an emergency takes you away from the student
- Complete an evaluation form upon conclusion of the job shadow

■ **Student**

- Attend an orientation session
- Participate actively in job shadow activities, asking questions and paying close attention to what is said and demonstrated
- Complete any job shadow assignments given by the teacher
- Observe all safety rules
- Adhere to behavior guidelines established by the teacher/program coordinator and job shadow host
- Dress appropriately
- Have a parent or guardian sign a consent form
- Obtain a signed consent form from the teachers whose classes are missed
- Participate in reflection exercises to think and talk about the job shadow
- Complete an evaluation form upon conclusion of the job shadow
- Write a letter thanking the job shadow host

■ **Teacher/program coordinator**

- Provide the student with background information on the company and its industry, or have the student research it
- Prepare an orientation session and/or materials for the employer and participating employees

**Job shadow:**
**roles and responsibilities of partners** cont.

- Hold an orientation for students and parents/guardians to discuss the purpose and expectations of a job shadow
- Provide the student with job shadow assignments that include interview questions about the workplace
- Ensure that the student has his or her signed parent/guardian and teacher consent forms
- Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the employer
- Arrange for transportation for the student to and from the worksite
- Integrate the student's worksite experience with learning at school
- Hold reflection sessions to allow students a chance to discuss what they saw and learned during the job shadow
- Assign the student to write a thank-you letter to the job shadow host

# Career exploration:

## roles and responsibilities of partners

Career exploration is a worksite experience (typically 10 to 30 hours over the course of several days or weeks) during which the student observes and interacts with workers, does hands-on activities, and completes written assignments to learn about the skills and knowledge required at the workplace. To get the greatest benefit, a student should complete several explorations across a variety of industries or within one specific industry. Through multiple explorations the student increases awareness of a variety of work settings and career areas. Most schools use career exploration for students in the ninth through 12th grades.

- **Employer (owner, president, personnel manager, or designate)**
  - Identify a lead contact person to coordinate the career exploration(s)
  - Inform employees about career exploration and recruit them for participation as career exploration supervisors
  - Identify opportunities that will meet career exploration objectives
  - Provide release time for employees to prepare and conduct the career exploration
  - Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the school
  - Make accommodations for students with special needs
- **Career exploration supervisor**
  - Attend a career exploration orientation session and/or review materials provided by the school
  - Identify appropriate hands-on activities
  - Discuss details of the career exploration—such as date, time, safety gear, special dress code—with the teacher/program coordinator
  - Schedule and confirm times for the career exploration with the teacher/program coordinator or student

**Career exploration:**
**roles and responsibilities of partners** cont.

- Sign an exploration agreement form
- Negotiate with the student activities he or she can be involved in to meet objectives of the exploration
- Give the student a tour of the workplace and introduce him or her to other employees
- Allow the student time to complete written assignments
- Respond to the student's questions
- Enlist the help of co-workers willing to let the student observe their work and ask questions
- Confirm a back-up person in the event an emergency takes you away from the student
- Evaluate the career exploration and the student's performance
- Complete an evaluation form

■ **Student**

- Select a career exploration site (unless the teacher/program coordinator assigns a placement)
- Negotiate with the employer how best to explore the worksite
- Sign an exploration agreement form
- Observe all safety rules
- Adhere to guidelines for behavior established by the teacher/ program coordinator and career exploration supervisor
- Dress appropriately
- Have a parent or guardian sign a consent form
- Obtain a signed consent form from teachers whose classes are missed

**Career exploration:**
**roles and responsibilities of partners** cont.

- Complete all written career exploration assignments
- Participate in reflection exercises to think and talk about the career exploration
- Complete an evaluation upon conclusion of the career exploration
- Write a letter thanking the career exploration supervisor

■ **Teacher/program coordinator**

- Assess the student's career interests (optional)
- Prepare an orientation session and/or materials for the employer and participating employees
- Hold an orientation session for students and parents/guardians to discuss the purpose and expectations of career exploration
- Sign a career exploration agreement form
- Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the employer
- Provide the student with a career exploration guide with written assignments to complete before, during, and after the exploration
- Provide support to the student and career exploration supervisor to maximize the learning at the workplace
- Certify that the student has satisfactorily completed all career exploration assignments
- Hold reflection sessions to allow students a chance to discuss what they saw and/or learned during the career exploration
- Integrate the student's worksite experience with learning at school
- Assign the student to write a thank-you letter to the career exploration supervisor

# Internship:
## roles and responsibilities of partners

An internship is a worksite experience (typically three to 18 weeks) during which a student—with guidance and supervision at the workplace—completes a planned series of activities, set of learning objectives, or project(s) designed to give a broad understanding of a business or occupational area. By integrating the internship activities or project(s) at the workplace with school-based learning, the student develops both job and academic skills. An internship culminates in a demonstration (product or presentation) of learning jointly evaluated by school and worksite staff. Most schools use internships for students in the 11th and 12th grades.

- **Employer (owner, president, personnel manager, or designate)**
  - Identify a lead contact person to coordinate the internship(s)
  - Inform employees about internships, and recruit them for participation as internship supervisors
  - Identify opportunities that will meet internship objectives
  - Provide time for employees to work with student interns
  - Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the school
  - Make accommodations for students with special needs
- **Internship supervisor**
  - Attend an internship orientation session and/or review materials provided by the school
  - Work with the student and teacher to define the internship project or learning objectives and the activities required to meet stated goals
  - Confirm internship schedule with the teacher/program coordinator
  - Sign an internship agreement
  - Provide ongoing instruction and supervision to the student

**Internship:**
**roles and responsibilities of partners** cont.

- Work with the teacher/program coordinator to help integrate the student's worksite experience with learning at school
- Review with the student all relevant health and safety issues and provide necessary safety gear
- Consult with teacher/program coordinator if problems arise at the worksite
- Specify rules regarding behavior and attendance and consequences of not adhering to the rules
- Evaluate the internship and the student's performance

■ **Student**

- Work with the teacher/program coordinator and internship supervisor to clearly define the outcomes and activities of the internship
- Sign an internship agreement
- Have a parent or guardian sign a consent form
- Meet all expectations for effort, performance, behavior, and attendance outlined in the internship agreement
- Observe the rules and regulations of the worksite
- Participate in reflection sessions to discuss with other students how things are going at the internship sites
- Complete an evaluation upon conclusion of the internship
- Write a letter thanking the internship supervisor
- Give a presentation and/or complete a final project to demonstrate what was learned during the internship

■ **Teacher/program coordinator**

- Inform students and parents/guardians of internship opportunities
- Design a process for selecting students, reviewing project ideas, and matching students with employers

## Internship:
### roles and responsibilities of partners cont.

- Prepare an orientation session and/or materials for the employer and participating employees
- Hold an orientation session for students and parents/guardians to discuss the purpose and expectations of internship
- Counsel the student on the design of his or her internship project and on internship site options
- Provide ongoing support to the student and internship supervisor
- Work with the internship supervisor and the student to integrate the experience on the job with learning at school
- Hold regular reflection sessions to allow students to discuss what is going on at their internship sites
- Assign the student to write a thank-you letter to the internship supervisor
- Evaluate the student's final project or presentation

# Extensive work-based learning:
## roles and responsibilities of partners

Extensive work-based learning is a worksite experience (typically three to 12 months) during which a student progresses through a planned sequence of increasingly demanding activities integrated with academic learning to (1) learn entry-level job skills and (2) get skill certification and/or postsecondary school credits. Most schools use extensive work-based learning for students in the 12th through 14th grades who, as the result of careful investigation, have identified a career area to pursue.

- **Employer (owner, president, personnel manager, or designate)**
  - Identify a lead contact person to coordinate the extensive work-based learning experience(s)
  - Inform employees about extensive work-based learning, and recruit them for participation as worksite supervisors
  - Identify opportunities that will meet extensive work-based learning objectives
  - Provide time for employees to work with students
  - Clarify legal rights, responsibilities, and liabilities with the school
  - Make accommodations for students with special needs
  - Provide students with a mentor in addition to the worksite supervisor
- **Worksite supervisor**
  - Attend an orientation session and/or review materials provided by the school
  - Work with the student and teacher/coordinator to define a sequence of increasingly demanding job skills the student will be expected to master to qualify for skill certification or college credits or to develop entry-level job skills
  - Help design a learning plan that reflects industry standards

## Extensive work-based learning: roles and responsibilities of partners cont.

- Provide instruction in job- and industry-related competencies
- Instruct the student in general workplace competencies, such as workplace safety, teamwork, and decisionmaking
- Provide consistent, concrete support and guidance to the student
- Keep in regular contact with the teacher/program coordinator to discuss progress and to report any concerns
- Work closely with the teacher/program coordinator to integrate worksite learning with academic and vocational courses at school

■ **Student**

- Participate in an orientation session
- Sign and adhere to the expectations articulated in the learning plan
- Understand and comply with rules and regulations of the worksite
- Demonstrate specified learning outcomes through a portfolio or other means of capturing academic and technical skills
- Talk to the teacher/program coordinator or employees immediately about questions regarding assignments, expectations, or appropriate behavior
- Participate in ongoing reflection sessions
- Give structured feedback about the extensive work-based learning placement through evaluation forms and conversations with the teacher/program coordinator
- Write a letter thanking the worksite supervisor

**Extensive work-based learning: roles and responsibilities of partners** cont.

- **Teacher/program coordinator**
  - Prepare an orientation session and/or materials for the employer and participating employees
  - Hold an orientation session for students and parents/guardians to discuss the purpose and expectations of extensive work-based learning
  - Help specify skills and competencies in the learning plan
  - Develop interdisciplinary, project-based learning curricula integrating academic and vocational learning with students' worksite experiences
  - Incorporate issues raised during students' reflection sessions on work experience into school-based assignments
  - Meet regularly with other teachers/program coordinators and employees to plan instruction and evaluate placements and student progress
  - Ensure the student has his or her signed parent/guardian consent forms
  - Keep in regular contact with the student's worksite supervisor and mentor
  - Hold regular reflection sessions to allow students a chance to discuss what is going on at their worksites
  - Regularly evaluate the student's performance
  - Assign the student to write a thank-you letter to the worksite supervisor

employer
recruitment & orientation

# glossary

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

**This glossary defines terms used in this guide as well as others relevant to work-based learning. Use it as a tool to help build a common understanding of work-based learning among all the partners who make it happen—students, parents or guardians, teachers, program coordinators, school administrators, employers, employees, union representatives, and other active members of your community.**

**All aspects of the industry.** An approach to work-based learning that emphasizes broad, transferable knowledge of the workplace rather than job-specific skills. As originally defined by the Carl D. Perkins Vocational and Applied Technology Act, all aspects of the industry includes these eight components common in every industry or enterprise: (1) planning, (2) management, (3) finance, (4) technical and production skills, (5) underlying principles of technology, (6) labor issues, (7) community issues, and (8) health, safety, and environmental issues. Some programs using this all-aspects framework have added additional components, such as ethics, history, and economics.

**Career.** A career is the lifelong intersection of education and employment, as opposed to a single job at one moment in time. Making decisions that result in a satisfying career depends on applying accurate information about the labor market to one's own interests and values.

**Career education.** Career education is a lifelong process of investigating employment options and exploring, developing, and refining one's career interests and skills.

**Career exploration.** A worksite experience (typically 10 to 30 hours over the course of several days or weeks) during which the student observes and interacts with workers, participates in hands-on activities, and completes written assignments to learn about the skills and knowledge required at the workplace.

**Competency-based education.** A curriculum and instructional approach based on the demonstration of knowledge and skills.

**Cooperative education.** A paid work experience arranged and supervised by a school for which a student receives academic credit and works toward an occupational goal.

**Continuum of work-based learning.** A progression of worksite experiences that range from field trip through extensive work-based learning. As the worksite experiences become increasingly complex, greater time and commitment are required from employers, teachers, and students.

**Employability skills.** Work habits, social skills, and attitudes valued by employers in any occupational area (e.g., responsibility, communication, initiative, teamwork, cooperation, attendance, organization, and flexibility).

**Entry-level skills.** The minimum education and skill qualifications necessary for obtaining and keeping a specific job; the starting point in a particular occupation or with a certain employer.

**Extensive work-based learning.** A worksite experience (typically three to 12 months) during which a student progresses through a planned sequence of increasingly demanding activities integrated with academic learning to (1) learn entry-level job skills and (2) receive skill certification and/or postsecondary school credits.

**Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA).** A federal law, originally enacted in 1938, that includes rules and regulations regarding child labor. The FLSA is applicable in every state; however, there are variations in state and federal child labor laws. If state and federal rules and regulations conflict, the stricter one applies.

**Field trip.** A worksite experience (typically one to three hours) during which a group of students, escorted by school staff, tours a business and speaks with workers.

**Integrated curriculum.** A way of organizing curriculum content so that academic learning and hands-on worksite experiences are linked to complement and reinforce each other.

**Industry skill standards.** Employer-defined and accepted levels of performance required for success in a particular occupation. Standards set by industries typically define core competencies and the related knowledge and skills integral to specific jobs.

**Internship.** A worksite experience (typically three to 18 weeks) during which a student completes a planned series of activities, set of learning objectives, or project(s) designed to give a broad understanding of a business or occupational area. An internship

culminates in a demonstration (product or presentation) of learning jointly evaluated by school and worksite staff.

**Job shadow.** A worksite experience (typically three to six hours) during which a student spends time one-on-one with an employee observing daily activities and asking questions about the job and workplace.

**Mentor.** A trusted, experienced, and interested individual who guides the development, education, and/or career of a younger or less experienced person. Many school districts recruit, train, and coordinate community volunteers to serve as both career and personal mentors for students.

**Nontraditional occupations.** Occupations in which representation of men or women has traditionally been less than 25 percent. For example, nontraditional occupations for women include auto mechanics and engineering; nontraditional occupations for men include nursing and secretarial work.

**Occupational skills.** The ability to perform tasks specific to a particular job. Occupational skills or job skills are sometimes contrasted with employability skills that are common to all jobs; for example, using a cash register is an occupational skill, while the ability to communicate well is an employability skill.

**Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).** A federal agency that develops and issues regulations concerning health and safety on the job; it conducts investigations and inspections to determine workplace compliance.

**Portfolio.** A collection of materials that documents and demonstrates a student's academic and work-based learning. Although there is no standard format for a portfolio, it typically includes many forms of information that exhibit the student's knowledge, skills, and interests. By building a portfolio, students can recognize their own growth and learn to take increased responsibility for their education. Teachers, mentors, and employers can use portfolios to record educational outcomes and for assessment purposes.

**Reflection.** Activities and assignments that are designed to (1) encourage students to analyze their learning experiences in the context of their interests, abilities, and values, (2) connect work with what they are learning in school, and (3) set meaning-

ful personal and career goals. Reflection can be organized as group discussion, journal writing, role playing, or multi-media projects as well as any other activities which help students apply what they have learned to their own lives and future.

**School-to-work-transition.** By restructuring education so that school-based learning is integrated with learning in the community, school-to-work (also called school-to-careers) increases opportunities for all students to identify and pursue their educational and career goals.

**SCANS (Secretary's Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills).** A 1991 federal report, *What Work Requires of Schools*, that identifies skills and competencies necessary for work readiness in any occupational area. The skills are divided into two categories: (1) foundation skills (basic skills, thinking skills, and personal qualities), and (2) workplace competencies (ability to productively use resources, interpersonal skills, information, systems, and technology).

**Skill certification.** Official confirmation that a student or worker can successfully perform a task to a set of accepted standards.

**Transferable skills.** Skills that are interchangeable among different jobs and workplaces. For example, the ability to handle cash is a skill transferable from restaurant cashier to bank teller; the ability to function well as a team member is transferable among most jobs and workplaces.

**Work-based learning.** A structured learning experience that integrates worksite experiences with classroom instruction. Through work-based learning students gain employability and occupational skills while applying and advancing their knowledge in academic areas.

**Worksite contact person.** The person at a worksite who coordinates work-based learning activities for students. This person's responsibilities may include (1) maintaining contact with school staff, (2) acting as a resource for other employees working with students, and (3) identifying the support necessary to provide a meaningful experience for students.

# Connections: Linking Work and Learning

**This is a series of products designed to facilitate work-based learning so that youth make informed career choices and experience success in the world of work. Other products in the series include:**

- **Career Exploration Guide**—Helps a student explore all aspects of a job/career over the course of several days at a worksite. A companion piece for staff outlines how to plan career explorations that are of maximum benefit to students.

**Job Shadow Guide**- Helps a student investigate a specific job during several hours at a worksite. A companion piece for staff outlines how to plan and implement effective job-shadow experiences.

**Learning Site Analysis Form**—Used collaboratively by school and worksite staff, this tool helps identify and analyze the learning potential of a worksite.

**Integrated Learning Projects**—Highlights how to design individual or group projects that integrate academic with work-based learning.

**Survival Skills Guide**—Provides strategies for identifying and teaching survival skills that are essential for independent living.

**Community-based Learning: From A to Z**—Gives a tour of key concepts and strategies that are intrinsic to making the community an extension of the classroom.

To order materials in this series, contact NWREL Document Reproduction Service at (800) 547-6339, ext. 519

For information about related staff development workshops, contact NWREL Education and Work program at (800) 547-6339, ext. 595 or (503) 275-9595.



This product is printed on recycled paper.

**NWREL**
**Education & Work Program**
101 SW Main Street, Suite 500
Portland, OR 97204

Phone: 503 / 275-9500
800 / 547-6339
Fax: 503 / 275-0443

Internet: http: / / www.nwrel.org

**Jobs for the Future**
One Bowdoin Square,
11th Floor
Boston, MA 02114

Phone: 617 / 742-5995
Fax: 617 / 742-5767

Internet: info@jff.org